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Sir.

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of:

Inventor: STEVEN H. PETH

For: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR AUTOMATED CREDIT MATCHING

Case Docket No Chevron Corporation Law Department - Patent and Licensing Unit P. O. Box 6006 San Ramon, CA 94583-0806

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For	No. Filed	No. Extra			
Basic Application Fee					
Total claims	31- 20	11			
Independent claims	11- 3	9			
Multiple dependent claims presented					
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TJHadlock pik Enclosures

August 23, 2000

Timothy J. Hadlock Attorney of Record

P.O. Box 6006, San Ramon, CA 94583-0806

- 1 BE IT KNOWN, that I, Steven H. Peth, resident of Concord, County of Contra Costa,
- 2 State of California, has invented new and useful improvements in a

4 SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR AUTOMATED CREDIT MATCHING

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SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR AUTOMATED CREDIT MATCHING

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II. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

- This invention relates to system and method for credit matching, especially in
- facilitating eCommerce transactions.

III. BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

- 15 Electronic commerce ("eCommerce") has proliferated over the Internet recently.
- One difficulty in eCommerce is handling payment processes. Presently, in
- Business-to-Consumer ("B2C") eCommerce, credit card payment and debit
- settlement are common methods of payment where the price of goods or services
- are relatively low. Business-to-Business ("B2B") eCommerce and some high dollar
- transactions in the B2C eCommerce, e.g., cars or furniture, however, can involve
- significantly higher dollar transactions than in the lower dollar B2C eCommerce.
- 22 Thus, in those cases credit card payments and debit settlements are often
- inappropriate or unavailable. To date, the payment and credit mechanisms utilized
- in B2B eCommerce transactions have followed the same model as with non-

- eCommerce transactions. That is, to extend credit the seller evaluates the buyers
- 2 credit rating and offers from zero or several credit offerings.
- The buyer either then selects one credit offering from the seller or obtains a loan
- from a third-party lender. Traditionally, large sellers only sell to large buyers in bulk
- with no little or no credit extension. Thus, small buyers' offers to buy small quantities
- from large sellers are typically rejected by the large seller. This is often because the
- 7 small buyer requires credit and the large seller does not wish to extend credit since it
- 8 would result in carrying accounts receivable for numerous small buyers. All of this
- 9 credit offering determination and selection is manpower and time intensive, thus
- greatly slowing the speed of the transaction. Also, if the buyer is not satisfied with
- the credit offerings of the seller, the buyer has little or no choice to easily, quickly,
- and conveniently secure other credit options.
- 13 Accordingly, there is a need for an automated credit evaluation, automated credit
- terms matching, and automated buyer selection and offering acceptance process
- which better matches the Internet's faster transaction capabilities and otherwise
- overcomes the above-described deficiencies. The method and system of the
- invention described herein provides such a solution.

IV. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

- 19 The invention includes a method of financing eCommerce purchases including:
- 20 receiving over the Internet buyer registration information. Then evaluating a credit
- rating for the buyer and passing over the Internet the credit rating to a seller, and
- then receiving over the Internet from the seller seller's credit options for the buyer.
- The next steps are determining other credit provider's credit options for the buyer,
- 24 creating a database of the credit options for the buyer. After receiving over the
- 25 Internet an order for the buyer, then querying the database with query criteria
- specific to the order, thereby resulting in a report of credit options for the buyer for
- the order. Passing over the Internet the report to the buyer; receiving over the
- 28 Internet the buyer's selection of a credit option; passing over the Internet a payment

- schedule for the buyer to an intermediary; and receiving payment remitted from the
- 2 buyer.
- In another embodiment, the invention includes a method of financing eCommerce
- 4 purchases including: evaluating a credit rating for the buyer, passing the credit rating
- to a seller, receiving from the seller seller's credit options for the buyer, determining
- other credit provider's credit options for the buyer, creating a database combining all
- of the credit options for the buyer, retrieving from the database a report of credit
- 8 options for the buyer, passing the report to the buyer, entering a credit agreement
- 9 with the buyer for at least one of the credit options, passing funds borrowed pursuant
- to the credit agreement to the buyer or the buyer's designated recipient; and
- receiving funds from the buyer in repayment of the borrowed funds pursuant to the
- credit agreement.
- 13 In another embodiment, the invention includes a memory for storing data for access
- by an application program being executed on a data processing system, including a
- buyer relation; a seller relation; an order relation; a credit provider relation; a credit
- terms relation; and a products relation; and wherein the attributes of said relations
- are selected such that such relations form a relational database.
- In other embodiments the invention includes systems configured and adapted to
- 19 perform the steps listed in the above-described methods, and computer readable
- 20 media containing computer readable instructions configured and adapted to perform
- the steps listed in the above-described methods.
- These and other features and advantages of the present invention will be made
- 23 more apparent through a consideration of the following detailed description of a
- 24 preferred embodiment of the invention. In the course of this description, frequent
- reference will be made to the attached drawings.

V. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- 2 FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram combining aspects of a conceptual data model /
- 3 entity-relationship diagram and data flow diagram showing the key components of
- 4 one embodiment of the invention and their interrelationships.
- 5 FIG. 2 is an alternate entity-relationship diagram showing the key components of
- one embodiment of the invention and their interrelationships.
- 7 FIG. 3 is a schematic block system level 0 flow chart diagram of one embodiment of
- 8 the invention.

- 9 FIG. 4 is a schematic level 1 data flow diagram (a first decomposition of the system
- diagram in Fig. 3) and shows logical data flow between major processes of one
- 11 embodiment of the invention.
- Fig. 5 is an example in one embodiment of relations for use in a credit option
- database. By way of background, databases require a consistent structure, termed
- a schema, to organize and manage the information. In a relational database, the
- schema is a collection of tables. For each table, there is generally one schema to
- which it belongs. In an implementation of a relational database, a relation
- corresponds to a table having rows, where each row corresponds to a record (or
- tuple), and columns, where each column corresponds to a field (or attribute). From
- a practical standpoint, rows represent records of related data and columns identify
- 20 individual data elements.
- Fig. 6A-6B illustrate in one embodiment sample SQL-type database queries for
- 22 matching credit options for a buyer.
- 23 Figs. 7-9 depicts in one embodiment various schematic diagrams of the exemplary
- logical process involved in credit matching for various scenarios.

VI. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

- 2 The major components (also interchangeably called aspects, subsystems, modules,
- functions, services) of the system and method of the invention, and examples of
- 4 advantages they provide, are described below with reference to the figures. For
- 5 figures including process/means blocks, each block, separately or in combination, is
- 6 alternatively computer implemented, computer assisted, and/or human implemented.
- 7 Computer implementation optionally includes one or more conventional general
- purpose computers having a processor, memory, storage, input devices, output
- 9 devices and/or conventional networking devices, protocols, and/or conventional
- client-server hardware and software. Where any block or combination of blocks is
- computer implemented, it is done optionally by conventional means, whereby one
- skilled in the art of computer implementation could utilize conventional algorithms,
- components, and devices to implement the requirements and design of the invention
- provided herein. However, the invention also includes any new, unconventional
- 15 implementation means.
- FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram combining aspects of a conceptual data model /
- entity-relationship diagram and a data flow diagram. It shows the key entities of one
- embodiment of the invention and their interrelationships and key messages
- transferring between the entities in the practice of the process and system of the
- 20 invention. Transaction Facilitator ("TF") 120 optionally provides financing services to
- 21 multiple buyers 110, multiple sellers 115, multiple eMarket Places, and obtains
- services from multiple credit evaluators 125. Note that a party could play multiple
- 23 rolls in the process at different times or at the same time. For example, a party
- could be both a buyer of goods and a seller of goods. Buyer 110 register with,
- 25 passes credit option selections, and remits payments to TF 120. TF creates credit
- 26 profile for, and passes credit options for a particular order to, buyer 110. Buyer then
- accepts a credit offering from TF. TF closes the financial order loop between buyer,
- seller, credit provider and TF. TF initiates financial transactions based on accepted
- 29 credit terms.

- One embodiment of a eCommerce financing method/process according to the
- invention with the entities shown in Fig. 1 is as follows. Buyer 110 registers with
- transaction facilitator 120. Registration includes: buyer's identification of sellers from
- 4 which buyer contemplates doing business; general business and financial
- information needed to facilitate credit evaluation by TF (e.g., financial statements) or
- 6 seller (including existing credit enhancements from external providers); and credit
- 7 needs and preferences for those suppliers previously indicated.
- Registration information of buyer 110 is processed through credit evaluator to
- 9 produce proprietary credit profile. The credit profile is passed with registration
- information and/or proprietary credit profile to anticipated sellers 115-specified by
- buyer. Seller 115 registers approved credit limit and terms for each buyer and/or
- buyer profile with transaction facilitator.
- Buyer 110 initiates purchase request with Market Place exchange 105. Market Place
- Exchange passes purchase request to transaction facilitator 120. Transaction
- facilitator 120 determines payment terms options based on approved credit limits
- and terms offered by sellers. Transaction facilitator 120 passes sellers' purchase
- approval and sellers' approved payment terms options, as well as TF and other 3rd
- party credit extension, if any, to buyer.
- 19 Transaction facilitator 120 passes other credit offerings to buyer; these may include,
- 20 e.g., additional capacity to buy, longer payment terms for revolving credit. Buyer
- 21 110 indicates acceptance or rejection of terms offered by the supplier or by the
- transaction facilitator. Transaction facilitator 120 notifies Market Exchange 105 of
- 23 buyers 110 acceptance and selected payment method. Market Exchange 105
- 24 advises transaction facilitator as to when events occur that trigger dates required to
- 25 schedule payment (e.g., ship date).
- 26 Transaction facilitator passes payment scheduling information to the Market Place
- 27 Exchange. Transaction facilitator 120 advises Market Place Exchange when to
- 28 prompt buyer for payment (full transaction information is optionally located in the

- Market Place Exchange). Buyer remits payment to transaction facilitator, or TF
- 2 initiates EFT according to buyer-accepted payment schedule. Transaction facilitator
- 3 aggregates payments from many buyers for each seller and remits funds to seller
- 4 with accounts receivable information. Also, the functions of the TF could be
- 5 combined with some or all of the roles of a Market Place Exchange, especially
- 6 financial roles, or vice versa. TF may only be a service provider or optionally may
- 7 also be a lender/credit provider.
- 8 Numerous variations on the above method will be understood by those skilled in the
- 9 art and are within the scope of the invention. For example, payment remittance
- could pass from buyer 110 to Market Place Exchange 105 or other intermediary
- before passing to TF 120 or could pass directly to Seller 115 where Seller is the
- lender/credit provider.
- FIG. 2 is an alternate entity-relationship diagram showing the key components of
- one embodiment of the invention and their interrelationships. Fig. 2 depicts
- substantially the same entities and relationships as in Fig. 1 except that a new entity
- is depicted, i.e., the buyers' and/or sellers' financial institution 220. Receipt of
- payment remittances from buyer is optionally directly from buyer's financial
- institution, e.g., by ACH or EFT. Transfer of funds from TF 215 to seller 210 is
- optionally made directly to seller's financial institution 220. In the TF entity 215,
- internal processes shown include credit extension, transaction clearing, data mining,
- 21 accounting reporting, and terms matching. TF 215 optionally maintains its own data
- 22 for determining a buyer's credit score and corresponding credit options to be
- extended to buyer 225.
- 24 TF 215 passes buyer registration information to seller 210 and seller passes
- 25 available credit terms/limits for buyer to TF. TF passes buyer registration
- information to credit evaluator 230 (also referenced throughout as Credit Info.
- 27 Provider) (e.g., Experian, Dunn & Bradstreet), and receives credit score and/or other
- 28 financial information back from credit evaluator. An eMarket place 205 passes a
- buyer's order information, and payment triggering dates, to TF 215. TF passes

- buyer credit option selection and payment schedule to eMarket Place 205. There
- are several variations on the buyer registration step and credit evaluation step, e.g.,
- 3 automated registration via cookies or related technologies. Also, credit evaluation
- 4 could involve accessing, separately or in combination, a plurality of commercial and
- 5 proprietary databases for credit histories. That credit information may optionally be
- 6 processed, separately or in combination, through a plurality of commercial and
- 7 proprietary credit evaluation application programs to determine the risk of lending to
- 8 a particular buyer.
- 9 FIG. 3 is a schematic block system level 0 flow chart diagram of one embodiment of
- 10 * the invention. Buyer 305 passes registration information to the Transaction •
- Facilitation ("TF") Process 0. The TF process 0 passes this registration information
- to Credit Information Provider 320. The Credit Info. Provider performs a credit
- scoring process on the Registration Information together with any credit history
- information held by the Credit Info. Provider to develop a credit score, credit profile,
- and/or other product useful for a Credit Provider in assessing risk (individually or in
- any combination referred to as "credit score"). The Credit Info. Provider 320 passes
- the Buyer's credit score to the TF process 0. In the TF process, the credit score is
- passed to one or more sellers 310. The sellers use the credit score in a credit
- evaluation process to develop credit offerings for a buyer 305. The seller passes the
- credit offerings for a buyer to the TF process. In the TF process, a database (or look
- up table) is created containing all available credit offerings from all sellers
- designated in the buyer's registration and from any third-parties.
- Upon receiving a product/service order from a buyer, an eMarketplace will pass the
- order with buyer's credit preferences for that order to the TF process. In the TF
- 25 process, a matching process occurs whereby the buyer's credit preferences are
- compared to credit offerings available from the seller(s) and, if none or insufficient,
- 27 credit offerings of third-parties and/or optionally the TF are checked. One or more
- credit offerings are then passed to the buyer 305 who selects one option and passes
- 29 that decision to the TF process.

- In the TF process, the buyer's credit selection together with a corresponding
- 2 payment schedule is passed to the eMarketplace. The buyer remits payments or TF
- initiates EFT draft or other payment according to the payment schedule set during
- 4 the ordering process. In the TF process the buyer's payment is transferred to the
- seller if the seller extended the credit less an transaction fee, if any. Where a third-
- 6 party provides some or all of the credit, the TF process transfers payment to the
- 7 seller upon shipment of products or other designated schedule. Alternatively, third-
- party funds are transferred to the buyer, who is the borrower, who then arranges
- 9 payment with the seller.
- FiG. 4 is a schematic level 1 data flow diagram (a first decomposition of the system—
- diagram in Fig. 3) and shows logical data flow between major processes of one
- embodiment of the invention. Information about a Buyer, e.g., registration
- information and credit history 405, optionally from the buyer, credit agencies, and/or
- a plurality of other data sources passes to process 1.0, Determine Credit Rating
- Process. There a credit rating 410 (also referred to throughout as "credit score") is
- determined and passed to process 2.0, Determine Credit Options Process. That
- process determines credit options 415 for a buyer and passes information about
- those credit options 415 to process 3.0, Create database of Credit Options for Buyer
- 19 Process.

- 21 The time elapsed between the buyer registration step and the completion of the
- creation of credit options database step is preferably minimal, e.g., less than 5, 3, 2,
- or 1 minute, or more preferably in real-time. In order for the data, e.g., buyer
- registration data, to be successfully passed between the processes, the data must
- be in a format acceptable to the receiving process. Preferably, to facilitate
- 26 implementation among a large number of users, a standard format will be
- developed, such as is possible using Extensible Markup Language, the universal
- 28 format for structured documents and data on the Web. Several industry-specific
- 29 XML standard formats already exist.

- In an optional step in the process the TF receives data from the buyer, seller, and/or
- 2 eMarket Place regarding shortages, spoilages, breakages, or other problems with a
- received order. The TF processes this data in an order/invoice adjustment process
- 4 to produce a revised order, payment terms statement to send the eMarket Place,
- 5 buyer, and/or seller.
- 6 A structured database, typically using the relational model, is created using
- 7 conventional tools, e.g., a relational database management system ("RDBMS"). A
- buyer's order 420 is based to process 4.0, Query Database for each Order of Buyer
- 9 Process. Optionally, using conventional searching technology commonly provided
- with commercial RDBMS' or proprietary technology, the database is queried to
- determine available credit options for the buyer for the particular order. A report 425
- is created of those options and passed to process 5.0, Buyer Selects Credit Option
- Process. The time elapsed between the order step and the completion of the credit
- options search step is preferably minimal, e.g., less than 5, 3, 2, or 1 minute, or
- more preferably in real-time. The buyer's selection 430 is passed to process 6.0,
- Fulfill Order and Collect Payment Per Terms of Credit Option Selection Process.
- Fig. 5 is an example in one embodiment of relations for use in a credit option
- database. The Buyer relation 510 in one embodiment contains the following
- attributes: Buyer ID, Name, Contact Info., Credit Score, and Credit terms ID(s). The
- 20 Seller relation 520 in one embodiment contains the following attributes: Seller ID,
- Name, Contact Info., and Credit Provider ID. The Credit Provider relation 530 in one
- 22 embodiment contains the following attributes: Credit Provider ID, Name, Contact
- 23 Info., and Approved Buyer ID(s). The Credit Terms relation 515 in one embodiment
- contains the following attributes: Credit Terms ID, Limit, Payment Schedule,
- Interest, Penalties, and Credit Provider ID. The Order relation 525 contains the
- of following attributes: Order ID, Buyer ID, Seller ID, Product ID(s), Credit terms ID,
- 27 Credit Provider ID, and Quantity. The Products relation 535 in one embodiment
- contains the following attributes: Product ID, Seller ID(s) and Product Description.
- Selection of attributes, attribute domains, keys and foreign keys, and normalization

- of relations sufficient to enable a database for determining available credit options
- for a particular buyer, having particular credit preferences, in a particular order, and
- from particular sellers is within the normal skill of one schooled in the database arts.
- 4 A seller's or other credit provider's credit offerings may vary depending on many
- factors, e.g., financial condition, economy, inventory, accounts receivables, buyer's
- status or order details, or other factors. Thus, in one embodiment of the invention
- the database is updated at regular intervals or upon some triggering event, e.g.,
- based on size of an order, lapsed time from most recent order, or upon seller's
- 9 request. As a result the credit score or evaluation of a buyer, the credit offerings of a
- seller or credit provider, and the credit offerings for a given order will be updated
- continually or on a flexible schedule as needed.
- Fig. 6A,B illustrates in one embodiment sample SQL-type database queries for
- matching credit options for a buyer. Figure 6A depicts an exemplary SQL-type
- query where each seller's credit options for a buyer are stored in separate Seller
- relations. Figure 6B depicts an exemplary SQL-type query where all credit options
- from all sellers and third-parties for all buyers are stored in separate Credit Terms
- relations. Persons skilled in the database arts know various alternative queries
- appropriate for a variety of database structures sufficient to return all credit options
- 19 for a particular buyer.
- Figs. 7-9 depicts in one embodiment various schematic diagrams of the exemplary
- logical process involved in credit matching for various scenarios. With reference to
- 22 Fig. 7, in this example, seller requirements 705 for cash settlement are transferred to
- 23 TF and matched against credit requirements 710 as outlined by the buyer. In this
- case, a match is made for "EFT" settlement at 10 days following delivery. Dates of
- delivery and receipt are fed from the market exchange and TF executes the
- transaction on the appropriate date.
- 27 With reference to Fig. 8, in this example, seller requirements 805 for cash settlement
- are transferred to TF and matched against credit requirements 810 as outlined by

- the buyer. In this case, there is no match between buyer and seller. The exchange
- 2 steps in with its credit offerings 815 to facilitate the transaction accepting the buyers
- desired used of a 3rd party bankcard on behalf of the seller. Cost of the interchange
- fee can be passed (or not passed) on from the seller to the buyer in the form of a
- 5 handling or other transaction fees. Dates of delivery and receipt are fed from the
- 6 market exchange and Riverpool executes the transaction on the appropriate date.
- With reference to Fig. 9, in this example, seller requirements 905 for cash settlement
- are transferred to TF and matched against credit requirements 910 as outlined by
- 9 the buyer. In this case, Seller wants good funds 10 days after delivery and buyer
- wants credit for 30 days. The eMarket Exchange (also referenced throughout as
- eMarket Place) or TF steps in with it credit offerings 915 to provide credit for 20 days
- to buyer at appropriate "pricing" based on risk assessment. Dates of delivery and
- receipt are fed from the eMarket exchange and TF executes the transaction on the
- 14 appropriate dates.
- 15 The web site for the system includes conventional web site development
- considerations known to experienced web site developers. Such considerations
- include content, content clearing, presentation of content, architecture, database
- linking, external web site linking, number of pages, overall size and storage
- requirements, maintainability, access speed, use of graphics, choice of metatags to
- 20 facilitate hits, privacy considerations, and disclaimers.
- Optionally, a test environment is used prior to deployment of the production system.
- In the test environment, the web site is loaded into an isolated test environment for
- debugging and for other test purposes. A piloting step is also optionally utilized (it
- 24 may also be called an alpha and/or beta testing step/means. In the pilot step, the
- 25 system is internally test marketed. The piloting step/means optionally includes
- formally or informally gathering feedback from the internal users of the web site for
- use in improving and debugging the site and for use in planning the marketing step.

VI. CLAIMS

2 WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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3	7	A method of financing eCommerce purchases comprising	
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- 4 (a) Receiving over the Internet buyer registration information;
- 5 (b) Evaluating a credit rating for said buyer;
- 6 (c) Passing over the Internet said credit rating to a seller;
- 7 (d) Receiving over the Internet from said seller seller's credit options for said buyer;
 - (e) Determining other credit provider's credit options for said buyer;
- 10 (f) Creating a database of said credit options for said buyer;
- 11 (g) Receiving over the Internet an order for said buyer;
- 12 (h) Querying said database with query criteria specific to said order, thereby 13 resulting in a report of credit options for said buyer for said order;
- 14 (i) Passing over the Internet said report to said buyer;
- 15 (j) Receiving over the Internet said buyer's selection of a credit option;
- 16 (k) Passing over the Internet a payment schedule for said buyer; and
- 17 (I) Receiving payment remitted from said buyer.

- The method of claim 1, wherein said creating step (f) occurs on a predetermined schedule, in response to pre-determined triggering events, upon a seller's or credit provider's request, and mixtures thereof.
- The method of claim 1, wherein the time elapsed between said receiving step (g) and said passing step (i) occurs in substantially real-time.
- 6 4. A method of financing eCommerce purchases comprising:
- 7 (a) Receiving over the Internet buyer registration information;
- 8 (b) Evaluating a credit rating for said buyer;
- 9 (c) Passing over the Internet said credit rating to a seller;
- 10 (d) Receiving over the Internet from said seller seller's credit options for said buyer;
- (e) Determining other credit provider's credit options for said buyer;
- (f) Creating a database of said credit options for said buyer;
- 14 (g) Receiving over the Internet an order for said buyer;
- 15 (h) Querying said database with query criteria specific to said order, thereby 16 resulting in a report of credit options for said buyer for said order;
- 17 (i) Passing over the Internet said report to said buyer;
- 18 (j) Receiving over the Internet said buyer's selection of a credit option;
- 19 (k) Passing over the Internet a payment schedule for said buyer; and

1		(1)	Receiving payment remitted from said buyer
2		(m)	wherein the time elapsed between said receiving step (g) and said passing step (i) is less than about five minutes.
4 5 6	5.	dete	method of claim 4, wherein said creating step (f) occurs on a pre- rmined schedule, in response to pre-determined triggering events, upon a er's or credit provider's request, and mixtures thereof.
7 8	6.		method of claim 4, wherein the time elapsed between said receiving step and said passing step (i) occurs in substantially real-time.
9	7.	A m	ethod of financing eCommerce purchases comprising:
10		(a)	Evaluating a credit rating for said buyer;
11		(b)	Passing said credit rating to a seller;
12		(c)	Receiving from said seller seller's credit options for said buyer;
13		(d)	Determining other credit provider's credit options for said buyer;
14		(e)	Creating a database combining all of said credit options for said buyer;
15		(f)	Retrieving from said database a report of credit options for said buyer;
16		(g)	Passing said report to said buyer;
17 18		(h)	Entering a credit agreement with said buyer for at least one of said credit options;
19		(i)	Passing funds borrowed pursuant to said credit agreement to said buyer

or the buyer's designated recipient; and

- 1 (j) Receiving funds from said buyer in repayment of said borrowed funds pursuant to said credit agreement.
- The method of claim 7, wherein said creating step (e) occurs on a predetermined schedule, in response to pre-determined triggering events, upon a seller's or credit provider's request, and mixtures thereof.
- The method of claim 7, wherein the time elapsed between said retrieving step (f) and said passing step (g) occurs in substantially real-time.
- The method of claim 7, wherein said passing, retrieving, and receiving steps occur over a network comprising the Internet.
- 10 11. A method of financing eCommerce purchases comprising:
- (a) Evaluating a credit rating for said buyer;
- 12 (b) Passing said credit rating to a seller;
- (c) Receiving from said seller seller's credit options for said buyer;
- 14 (d) Determining other credit provider's credit options for said buyer;
- (e) Creating a database combining all of said credit options for said buyer;
- 16 (f) Retrieving from said database a report of credit options for said buyer;
- (g) Passing said report to said buyer;
- 18 (h) Entering a credit agreement with said buyer for at least one of said credit options;

- (i) Passing funds borrowed pursuant to said credit agreement to said buyer or the buyer's designated recipient; and

 (j) Receiving funds from said buyer in repayment of said borrowed funds pursuant to said credit agreement.
- 5 (k) wherein the time elapsed between said retreiving step (f) and said 6 passing step (i) is less than about three minutes.
- The method of claim 11, wherein said passing, retrieving, and receiving steps occur over a network comprising the Internet.
- 9 13. The method of claim 11, wherein said creating step (e) occurs on a pre-10 determined schedule, in response to pre-determined triggering events, upon a 11 seller's or credit provider's request, and mixtures thereof
- 12 14. A method of facilitating commercial transactions over a network, said method comprising:
- (a) Creating a database of credit options for a buyer;
- 15 (b) Receiving over a network an order for said buyer;
- 16 (c) Querying said database with query criteria specific to said buyer and to
 17 said order, thereby resulting in a report of credit options for said buyer for
 18 said order;
- 19 (d) Passing said report over said network to said buyer; and
- 20 (e) Receiving over said network said buyer's selection of a credit option.
- 21 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the time elapsed between said receiving step (b) and said passing step (d) is not substantially greater than real-time.

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- 1 16. The method of claim 14, wherein said creating step (a) occurs on a predetermined schedule, in response to pre-determined triggering events, upon a seller's or credit provider's request, and mixtures thereof.
- 4 17. The method of claim 14, wherein said network comprises the Internet.
- 18. A method of facilitating commercial transactions over a network, said method comprising:
- 7 (a) Creating a database of credit options for a buyer;
 - (b) Receiving over a network an order for said buyer;
 - (c) Querying said database with query criteria specific to said buyer and to said order, thereby resulting in a report of credit options for said buyer for said order;
 - (d) Passing said report over said network to said buyer;
- (e) Receiving over said network said buyer's selection of a credit option; and
- 14 (f) wherein the time elapsed between said receiving step (b) and said 15 passing step (d) is not substantially greater than real-time.
- 19. The method of claim 18, wherein said creating step (a) occurs on a predetermined schedule, in response to pre-determined triggering events, upon a seller's or credit provider's request, and mixtures thereof.
- 19 20. The method of claim 18, wherein said network comprises the Internet.
- 21. A method of facilitating commercial transactions over a network, said method comprising:

- Creating a database of credit options for a buyer; (a) 1 Receiving over a network an order for said buyer; 2 (b) Querying said database with query criteria specific to said buyer and to (c) 3 said order, thereby resulting in a report of credit options for said buyer for 4 said order; 5 Passing said report over said network to said buyer, wherein the time (d) 6 elapsed between said receiving step (b) and said passing step (d) is less 7 than about two minutes; and 8 Receiving over said network said buyer's selection of a credit option. 9 (e) The method of claim 21, wherein said time elapsed is substantially real-time. 22. 10 The method of claim 21, wherein said creating step (a) occurs on a pre-23. 11 determined schedule, in response to pre-determined triggering events, upon a 12 seller's or credit provider's request, and mixtures thereof. 13 The method of claim 21, wherein said network comprises the Internet. 14 24. Computer-readable media tangibly embodying a database schema comprising: 25. 15 a buyer relation; 16 (a) a seller relation; 17 (b) (c) an order relation; 18
- 20 (e) a credit terms relation; and

(d)

a credit provider relation;

1		(f)	a products relation; and
2		(g)	wherein the attributes of said relations are selected such that such
3			relations form a relational database.
4	26.	A m	emory for storing data for access by an application program being
5		exec	cuted on a data processing system, comprising
6		(a)	a buyer relation;
7		(b)	a seller relation;
8		(c)	an order relation;
9		(d)	a credit provider relation;
10		(e)	a credit terms relation; and
11		(f)	a products relation; and
12		(g)	wherein the attributes of said relations are selected such that such
13			relations form a relational database.
14	27.	Con	nputer-readable media tangibly embodying a database schema comprising
15		(a)	a buyer relation comprising attributes sufficient to uniquely describe said
16			buyer and comprising at least one foreign key or having its key as a
17			foreign key in another relation sufficient to capture said buyer relation's
18			relationship with at least one other relation;
19		(b)	a seller relation comprising attributes sufficient to uniquely describe said
20			buyer and comprising at least one foreign key or having its key as a

1			foreign key in another relation sufficient to capture said seller relation's
2			relationship with at least one other relation;
3		(c)	a credit provider relation comprising attributes sufficient to uniquely
4			describe said buyer and comprising at least one foreign key or having its
5			key as a foreign key in another relation sufficient to capture said buyer
6			relation's relationship with at least one other relation;
7		(d)	a credit terms relation comprising attributes sufficient to uniquely describe
8			said buyer and comprising at least one foreign key or having its key as a
9	→		foreign key in another relation sufficient to capture said credit terms
10			relation's relationship with at least one other relation; and
11		(e)	wherein the attributes of said relations are selected such that such
12			relations form a relational database.
13	28.	In a	n eCommerce vertical marketplace, a method of operating a database
14		man	agement system for facilitating extension of credit, said method
15			prising:
16		(a)	Receiving information about a buyer sufficient to evaluate the relative risk
17			of extending credit to said buyer;
18		(b)	Determining said relative risk;
19		(c)	Determining a plurality of credit options for said buyer from a plurality of
20			credit providers based on said relative risk determined in step (b);
21		(d)	Creating a database of said credit options for said buyer;
22		(e)	Wherein said database is constructed and adapted for querying, thereby
23			resulting in a report of credit options for said buyer; and

- 1 (f) Wherein said database is in communication with a network constructed 2 and adapted for passing said report to said buyer or to an intermediary for 3 passing to said buyer.
- The method of claim 28, wherein the time elapsed between said receiving step (b) and said creating step (d) is less than about one minute.
- The method of claim 28, wherein the time elapsed between said receiving step

 (b) and said creating step (d) occurs in substantially real-time.
- 8 31. The method of claim 28, wherein said network comprises the Internet.

Abstract of the Disclosure

- 2 The invention includes a method of financing eCommerce purchases including:
- receiving over the Internet buyer registration information. Then evaluating a credit
- 4 rating for the buyer and passing over the Internet the credit rating to a seller, and
- then receiving over the Internet from the seller seller's credit options for the buyer.
- The next steps are determining other credit provider's credit options for the buyer,
- 7 creating a database of the credit options for the buyer. After receiving over the
- 8 Internet an order for the buyer, then querying the database with query criteria
- 9 specific to the order, thereby resulting in a report of credit options for the buyer for
- the order. Passing over the Internet the report to the buyer; receiving over the
- Internet the buyer's selection of a credit option; passing over the Internet a payment
- schedule for the buyer to an intermediary; and receiving payment remitted from the
- 13 buyer.

FIGURE 1

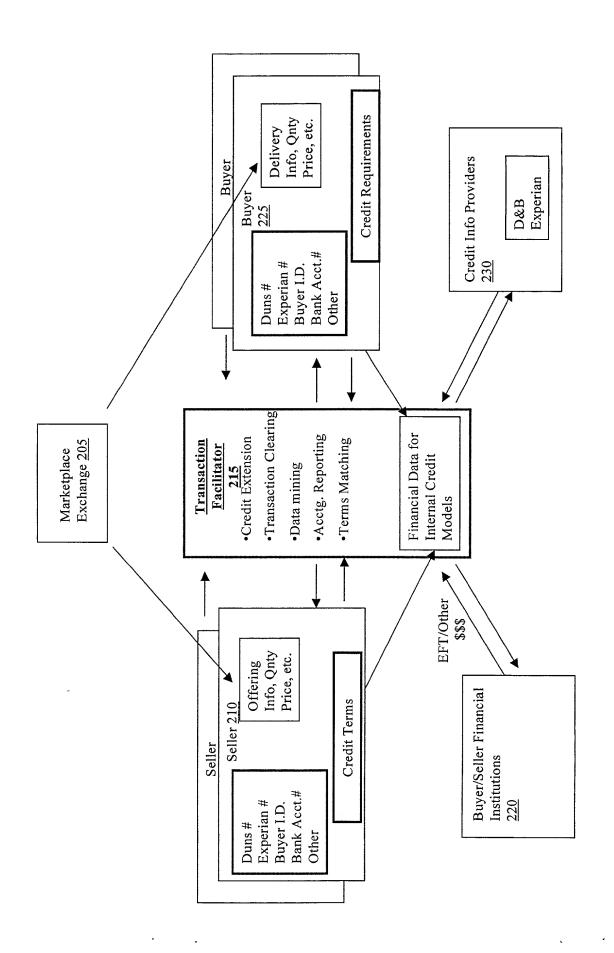


FIGURE 2

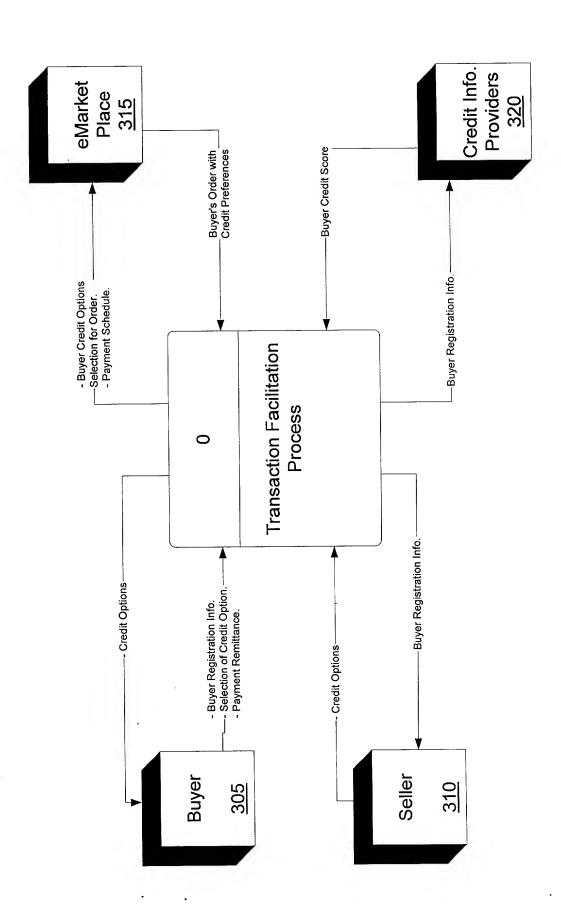
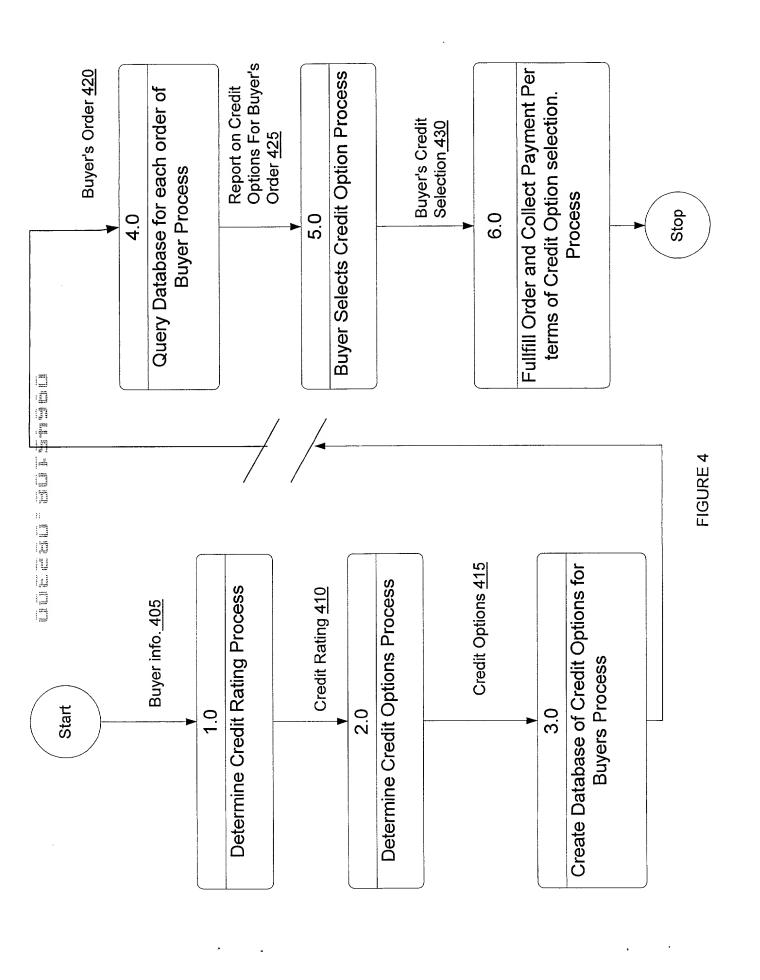


FIGURE 3



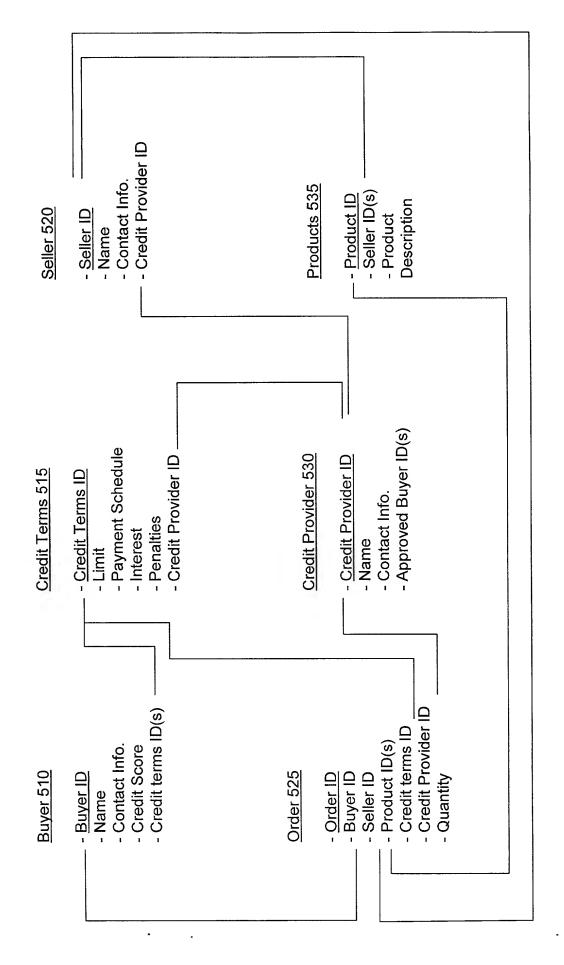


FIGURE 5

FROM SELLER1, SELLER 2, SELLER_N SELECT *

WHERE (SELLER_N.Attribute 1

SELLER_N.ATTRIBUTE 2

Insert Buyers Credit Preferences SELLER_N.ATTRIBUTE_N) = '___Insert Buyers Credit I AND SELLER_N.ATTRIBUTE_N = BUYER.Attribute_N;

FIG. 6A

SELECT * FROM CREDIT_TERMS

WHERE (CREDIT_TERMS.Attribute 1

CREDIT_TERMS.ATTRIBUTE 2

CREDIT_TERMS.ATTRIBUTE_N) = '___Insert Buyers Credit I AND CREDIT_TERMS.ATTRIBUTE_N = BUYER.Attribute_N;

Insert Buyers Credit Preferences_

FIG. 6B

				120						
705				06						
				09						
				30						
120				N/10						
06				Other/ Specific	# Days					
09				Buyer	3rd Party Cards	ACH/EFT	Debit	Procard	B2B/B2C Exchange	External
30				Bu	3rd Par	ACH	De	Pro	B2B Excl	Exte
N/10									/	
Other/ Specific # Days								710		
Seller	3rd Party Cards	ACH/EFT	Debit	Procard	B2B/B2C Exchange	External				

FIGURE 7

FIGURE 8

FIGURE 9